

# July 2009

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### Honduran labor movement protests military coup

Trade unionists in Honduras – a country that despite its small size is the fourth largest exporter of garments to the United States – have been vociferously rallying in support of democratically-elected President Manuel Zelaya, who was violently ousted from power by a military coup June 28. SweatFree Communities supports workers in Honduras, including Elizabeth Gutierrez, a former garment worker and leader in FESITRADEH, the Honduran garment workers' union, who toured the U.S. this spring with SweatFree Communities to educate the public about conditions in the Honduran garment industry.

News organizations report the suspension of civil liberties including freedom of association, and violence against trade unionists. And the major garment industry trade group is supporting the unelected regime to boot. Read more in-depth analysis of the Honduran coup and reports from the Honduran labor movement [here](#).

### Register now for the 6th Annual SweatFree Summit

**Join the national sweatfree movement September 11-13, 2009 for a weekend of strategic planning, skills development, and revelry.** [Register online](#) now. This year's conference – our sixth! – will be retreat-style and will focus on leadership development through advanced skills and deeper strategy. Our goal is to have at least 2 representatives from each local sweatfree campaign at the conference. Travel scholarships are available - contact Liana at [liana@sweatfree.org](mailto:liana@sweatfree.org). Thank you to all who are able to contribute to the scholarship fund (you can do so online when you register).

### Campaign Corner: The latest in sweatfree victories

Boy, have we proved the nay-sayers wrong! How many times have we heard that an economic crisis is no time to be pushing stronger workers rights' policies – that we should just wait a little while? Well, in this month's campaign round-up, we throw a little meat on the bones of what we've been saying all along: that an economic downturn is exactly the right time to be promoting sensible anti-sweatshop policies that raise wages and improve job security for low-wage workers. On June 24, **the City of Berkeley, California became the 39th city in the U.S. to pass a sweatfree policy**, with the Council voting unanimously for one of the strongest ordinances yet. Congratulations to Berkeley's Peace and Justice Commission, Commission on Labor, the Progressive Jewish Alliance, and allied organizations for 3 years of powerful grassroots organizing!

[Read all the latest campaign updates](#) - including **victories in San Francisco, Milwaukee, Ashland (Oregon), and Maine** - all from the month of June alone!

### Drumroll please...

The SweatFree Purchasing Consortium has welcomed its first membership dues! So far, the cities of Austin, Texas and Milwaukee, Wisconsin have backed up their commitment to the policy enforcement and development body with checks. Be sure to visit the Consortium's new website, [www.buysweatfree.org](http://www.buysweatfree.org). SweatFree Communities looks forward to participating in the Consortium's first governing body meeting in Lake Tahoe this September.

### Campaign Endorser Spotlight: Interfaith Worker Justice of Detroit

Interfaith Worker Justice–Metro Detroit is a faith and labor coalition that has led the way in keeping workers' rights front and center in the Motor City since 1995, when religious groups began to publicly support striking Detroit newspaper workers. Since fall 2008 the group also has served as the home of the SweatFree Michigan Campaign. Through a fellowship with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, Jonathan Fung has played the role of lead organizer for IWJ-Metro Detroit over the last year, balancing a variety of community-based campaigns ranging from SweatFree Michigan to supporting child care providers' organizing.

Many of IWJ-Metro Detroit's (formerly the Detroit Interfaith Committee on Worker Issues) board members, including Sister Cathey DeSantis, Father Norm Thomas, Dia Pearce, and Selma Goode, have deep roots in the anti-sweatshop movement, providing the SweatFree Michigan Campaign with institutional knowledge that has helped earn significant media coverage and access to key decision makers. Learn more about IWJ-Metro Detroit's work with SweatFree Communities at the Michigan campaign's website: [www.sweatfree.org/mi](http://www.sweatfree.org/mi).

**Add your organization, business, or union to the list of more than 250 sweatfree campaign endorsers [here](#).**

### Eagle workers continue the fight to save Massachusetts jobs

As you'll know from our previous updates, for the past two months, workers at Eagle Industries in New Bedford, MA have been struggling to prevent Eagle's parent company Alliant Techsystems (ATK) from closing their plant and relocating production of the Army backpack contract that they work on to Puerto Rico. Workers have held mass meetings and rallies, traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with the Massachusetts congressional delegation, and visited the Army contracting office in Natick, MA in order to urge the Army to compel ATK to keep production in New Bedford. On July 9, General Peter Fuller, the commanding general at Natick, met with workers in New Bedford and informed them that the Army had nearly satisfied its demand for backpacks and consequently would not renew ATK's contract.

Upon receiving this news, workers changed tactics and are now cooperating with the Massachusetts congressional delegation, local political and community leaders, and Workers United to bring a new company and new contracts to New Bedford. Workers United has already identified an interested company and is working with political allies to ensure that this company has every opportunity to open a new facility in New Bedford, win military contracts, and put displaced Eagle workers back to work with a union contract.

### The Spirit of Seattle Lives!

Our friends at SweatFree Northwest and the Oregon Fair Trade Campaign invite you to join in a **day of action and celebration of the 10-year anniversary of the "Battle in Seattle."** A decade ago, tens of thousands of people converged in Seattle, Washington to protest the ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization. Now, the WTO has scheduled a new ministerial on the exact ten-year anniversary of the Seattle protests. Labor, environmental, faith, human rights and community activists throughout the globe are planning local actions to celebrate our victory in Seattle and call for an end to expansion of "free market" corporate rule. [Learn how to get involved locally.](#)

### Thank you & keep it coming!

It's not too late to contribute to SweatFree Communities' 2009 summer appeal. [Sign up](#) as a **SweatFree Sustainer, chip in \$10, \$20 or more a month by July 31 and receive a free full-color copy of our most recent report, *Subsidizing Sweatshops II*.** With low-wage employees like garment workers taking the biggest hit in this economic crisis, the work of the anti-sweatshop movement is more important now than ever. Thank you for being part of our movement for economic justice and dignified work. [Donate online now.](#)

**Thanks so much to all sweatfree donors and supporters during these difficult times.** Our work would not be possible without contributions, large and small, from individuals, unions, faith-based organizations, and other groups. We'd also like to thank the foundations that are and

have been supporting the sweatfree movement for many years. They include: Debley Foundation, General Service Foundation, Panta Rhea Foundation, the Presbyterian Hunger Program (Presbyterian Church, USA), and the Woodbury Fund. We are also grateful for support from Equal Exchange's charitable contributions program.